

Workshop: Sensual Dancing.

Aims: This workshop is aimed at giving the followers some ideas about how to introduce “sexiness” into a dance, and giving the leads a few ways to invite the follower to misbehave.

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Conclusion: By the end of this workshop, you should be able to turn it on and look steamy on the dance floor; followers will be able to tease the leads and leads will be able to entice the followers.

Prior Knowledge: This document assumes you already know how to lead and follow basic moves – the advice and practices within are wholly stylistic. While leading any of the exercises contained within, the follower will use the lead as more of an invitation than a direction; therefore the lead must be light and the leader willing for it to be ‘broken’ by the lady’s improvisation.

Most of the stylings within this rely on the follower hi-jacking the dance and improvising over the top of the lead’s signals – this *can* be disconcerting for the lead. Followers must also remember to relinquish control again when asked by the lead.

Amendments:

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Introduction

Chemistry

When there is chemistry between two dancers, the world around them dissolves and nothing exists but each other and the music. They are lost in a world of movement and expression. They appear to move on intuition and are in tune with each other.

The rare times when you get this connection, you wish it would never end. But you don't *need* to have this level of chemistry between you to introduce some sensuality – for the next three minutes, the person in front of you is your world.

Music

While it may be possible to include some sensual movements and passion into fast tracks, to do so you have to span them over a few counts. While it could be put into 'breaks' to add contrast, it is normally much more in keeping with the music to *sensualise* slower tracks. “Blues” music has a sensual style of dancing that is a sub-division of MJ – this workshop may blur the lines a little bit and delve into some of the more ‘blusey’ moves and styling, and most of the following could be incorporated into blues dancing.

Comfort

IMPORTANT: These moves and stylings may reduce your ‘personal space’, but they should not remove it completely. At **no** time should the lead or follower’s hands wander from normal, acceptable contact points used in all other MJ (unless directed by their partner of course.)

The dance is still just a dance; not an excuse for fumbling foreplay on the dance floor: An elegant and sensuous form of foreplay perhaps, but nothing crude or invasive.

Followers: these moves are optional extras; not fitted as standard. It’s up to you how and if you do them – never feel pressurised into letting the lead ‘try it on’ and never feel like you have to let the lead get close than you are comfortable with.

Leads: be courteous. The leads and movements for these moves are identical to any other move you would lead on the dance floor: most of the sensuality comes from the follower. Do not try to force them into ‘close’ moves, do not stare at them *all* the time, do not only dance with their cleavage and do not trail hands excessively.

Just because a lady may drape themselves all over another dancer, it is not safe to assume that they will do the same thing when dancing with you.

Remember, these movements will involve you getting up-close-and-personal with your partner – take some care to ensure that your personal hygiene will not offend them.

Creeps

Unfortunately there are some people that just give you the creeps. There are others that perv and try to take advantage of the proximity Dancing gives. Please do not feel obliged to dance with these people. By making your dancing look sensuous, you may become more of a target for this sort of person.

If someone tries anything inappropriate on the dance floor (or off it), various steps can be taken:

- Make sure it was no accident
- Warn them and advise that this is not tolerated
- Walk off the dance floor
- Inform the Taxi dancers
- Inform the Venue manager
- Inform the Teacher
- Inform the franchisee or head office of that brand.

Fortunately however, the number of people who fall into this category on the dance scene are very, very small.

Posing

What is a pose?

A pose is not really a stationary position – it is the end extension of a movement. In a pose, you don't just “freeze” and play musical statues: You adopt the pose, and the ‘stationary’ fraction is when your body is motionless; the motionlessness cascades from your ‘core’ to your extremities.

Exercise: Basket un-wrap and re-wrap

- *Turn the follower into a basket by your side*
- *Release the left hand and nudge the lady out to unwrap to your right hand side.*
- *Lead the follower to a stationary position and indicate that she's not to immediately roll-back in. (downward pressure on the connecting hand normally works.)*
- *Appreciate the lady.*

Followers:

- *On the un-wrap, don't rotate away too far; gain extra ‘distance’ with a slight lean away, straightening the left arm.*
- *once you have unwrapped, use the next beat to continue your movement through your right arm; out and up in a fluid motion, ending at the very tips of your fingers.*
- *While doing this, watch the movement of your own hand*
- *at the extension point, a coy glance at your partner will signal him that you're done.*

Leads:

- *at this glance (or a slight tugging as the follower starts to lead themselves back in), lead the lady back in to your side.*

Followers – option 1:

- *fast wrap in, leaning you're the back of your shoulder into the man and continuing the free arm's movement in a ‘slow-down’ curve*

Followers – option 2:

- *slower over-wrap in; don't come in right to your partner's side on the wrap, and continue to turn, forcing the lead's arm behind your back. Your right forearm should be on the lead's chest*

The pose is generally used as an appreciation move, timed with the breaks in the music where the lead simply observes and drools. However since ‘everyone’ poses on a break, you may want to try timing it to wrap in for the break – this works well in a lot of music where there is an impact before the break.

{A “break” in music is normally where the drums stop for a little bit – since you are dancing to the music, a lot of dancers choose to freeze and stop dancing at these points. This is commonly referred to as “hitting the break”}

How long?

If the follower holds a pose longer than the break, or long enough that the lead begins to feel silly, the lead should not re-take the lead from an extended position – this will more than likely pull the follower off balance and will look like you are reeling them in.

Instead, the lead should go to the follower and collect with a hip or waste connection to resume dancing.

Tips

- the follower should ignore the lead within a pose: It's about attitude and confidence
- the lead should look like they are paying attention and appreciative
- they should also refrain from using any movements that detract from the follower
- an alternative for the lead is to also strike a pose, however this only works well when the timing of both is synchronous.
- to come out of a pose, it looks much cooler if the process is gradual, movement starting at the fingers/hands and working their way back in; almost a reverse of the extension.
- a pose works well as a contrast movement: the pose being a large extension move, the move before and after it should be ‘tight’ and condensed for maximum impact.

Looks

Eye contact...

Eye contact can be one of the most tantalising and sensual things within a dance. It gives the dancers a ‘connection’ noticeable from any spectator’s view point. Some people are uncomfortable with too much or prolonged eye contact – looking at the eyebrows or some random point about your partner’s eyes gives the same external appearance, without the intimacy.

It’s not a staring contest, and you don’t have to be in each other’s faces.

Exercise: turning away

lead:

- *From a standard comb, lead’s right hand on right shoulder with lady’s right hand*
- *Turn clockwise to un-wind yourself. If you don’t already have eye contact, make it as you start the turn.*
- *take the turn over two counts*
- *make the turn smoothly cascade from your feet to hips to torso to head to eyes.*

follow:

- *on a turn/return*
- *If you don’t already have eye contact, make it as you start the turn.*
- *take the turn over two counts*
- *make the turn smoothly cascade from your feet to hips to torso to head to eyes.*

Punctuation...

Looks can be used to great effect at any point within a dance and you don’t need to disrupt the lead or follow to do it. some examples:

- a coy glance to ensure that your partner is still watching you.
- a quick “I know something you don’t” look before hi-jacking for some styling.
- dynamically looking away when moves send you away from your partner.
- bringing your head round to face at the last instant of moves where you are coming in towards your partner (Warning: Be wary of head clashes when doing it close)

Appraisal...

Or “checking out” your partner. It has to be obvious and bold; you are giving a lot of focused attention on your partner. Always smile when doing this. Start with eye contact then move to, hair, face, neck, ...down to feet; then either work back up or return to eye contact. (Do **not** let your gaze linger on any particular area!)

Warning; this move will make a lot of people self-conscious – if it’s done to you, correct your posture, strike a pose (as per above) and think regal.

The ‘appraisal’ look works best when you can see all of your partner – normally at the end of an extended move. However, it could be adapted from any close move to move yourself down and up instead of just your head/eyes. (If doing this, try to keep your back upright and maintain an air gap between you.)

Another variation of the ‘appraisal’ from a close move is to follow your partner’s styling with your head and eye movement – this works well on a simple extensions.

Caresses

The caress is one of the most sensual stylings in dance. Running your hands over your own body has the essence of showing how you would like your dream partner to run their hands over you. Running your hands over your partner is a massive tease and ‘power play’. There is danger of going too far with these moves, and there are some things that you can do to give the impression of intimacy without launching yourself at your partner:

Followers

Self caress: You don’t actually need to touch or have physical contact – what you want to do is give an outline and smooth, graceful curves; follow the line of your leg, or hips, or arms, or neck, or face... Trace these curves with extended fingers, leaving as much of a gap as another hand would. This sort of caress is natural to finish in a pose, or come into from a pose.

Caressing your own neck and hair gives a look of abandonment into the music and the dance.

To give a more “domineering” feel to the dance, while maintaining the sensuality, the follower can use the back of the lead’s hand to place it on their body – this involves a lot of trust. If the lead has this happen to them, then the hands stay where they were put unless contact is broke to resume dancing.

Partner caress: Again, physical contact is not necessary, but there is not that much a male lead would object to from a female follower. Leaning into a caress gives it more intimacy, leaning away gives more ‘appreciation’. Eye contact while caressing has a huge ‘flirt’ factor, watching the hand as it caresses is slightly more detached, but shows a confidence in movement.

The most obvious caress is taking your time over a man-spin or shoulder-slide and running your hand down the man’s back (although you may want to avoid this at the end of a hot night)

Another simple move to caress from is the comb; instead of resting your hand on the shoulder, the back of the lead’s neck and base of skull makes it an amazingly sensual move. (but again to be avoided on hot nights)

On moves like a wrap where the follower’s spare hand is the one closest to the lead, a caress of the lead’s cheek or jaw-line can be sensuous, but it has to be in conjunction with resting the head back into the lead for the desired effect.

In the same sort of moves, the outside of the lead’s thigh is another good caressing point for the follower

There are moves where the spare hand is used as a block on the lead’s chest or shoulder – these moves can also be turned into caresses.

Leads

It seldom looks good for a lead to be caressing themselves. If the follower initiates it however, the caress could be guided or simply halted with a hand over the back of the followers.

It is generally the case that the follower does the caressing; but in moves where you have them in close, like dips and baskets, it is simple to add in a face contour caress or follow an arm or trace the ‘line’ of your partner.

Avoid any caresses or even mock caresses of the follower’s body unless you are absolutely sure that it won’t be misconstrued. Rather than having eye contact when caressing, watch your hand(s).

Exercise: basket caress (lead)

- *From a standard basket entrance*
- *On the 'twist back', leads keep the follower locked into your side as the left hand (follower's right) is taken over their head to their left shoulder and released*
- *On the 'twist forward', with palm up, run the backs of your fingers gently down the follower's left arm and it ends in a nice 'offered' position.*

Exercise: wrap caress (follow)

- *From a standard wrap in*
- *on the 'twist back', instead of offering the left hand out at waist height, raise the left arm in an L shape and run a finger down the outside of the lead's face.*

Tips

- Caresses are a lot less invasive flowing downwards or away from your partner
- Using the back of the hand, and back of the fingernails rather than the fingers/palm to caress your partner gives the same look and *feel* of sensuality, but limits the 'sleaze' factor.
- If a hand is placed on your partner's body, it stays there until it is removed or the contact is broken; this contact becomes another point that the lead may choose to lead from.
- If the face is caressed, a small amount of 'nuzzling' can seal the styling so that it's mutual.
- If a caress is getting too intimate, simply step back.
- If you're being caressed, you can either make a deliberate point of looking away or closing your eyes and tilting your head back to show appreciation.

Footwork

In Tango (generally considered to be one of the most sensuous partner dances), one of the more passionate and sensual things that the follower can do is use their feet/legs to caress the lead's legs. Try to remember that adding some sensuous caressing is not limited to using your hands.

Getting Close

There are two basic 'positions' that lend themselves to closer moves and sensuous dancing in Modern Jive: They are the "Blues Basic" and the "Basket Cuddle" (or "Blues Inverse"). These are the core of "Blues" dancing and you will find a whole new sub-set of moves, movements and interpretation on other workshops dedicated to this.

These positions are close and if you or your partner has any issues about comfort or body space, these will emphasise it. The moves are the easiest to be taken advantage of and partners should know each other before playing with them.

When in either of these positions, your bodies are so close that you can't use *looks*, *caresses* are almost impossible, and *poses* become combined movements rather than to be appreciated by your partner. However, it can be very intimate with the connection through your whole body and leads coming from your chest and legs rather than hands.

Exercise: blues basic

- *Very similar to a first move*
- *Lead the follower in front of you, quartering so that their right foot is between yours and your right foot is between theirs.*
- *Right arm should encircle the follower so that the fore-arm is in the hollow of their back and palm is placed flat, fingers closed, as far round as is comfortable.*
- *Follower's left arm should be on the inside of the lead's shoulder muscle(push for escape)*
- *Left hand should be held loosely, relaxed about thigh level*
- *Follower may put head on lead's chest or left shoulder for more a more intimate hold.*

Tips

- The hand positions don't really matter; the right hand/arm is used to keep the follower in place and convey the lead, the left is used for styling mainly and could be anywhere.
- Use the left hand on hip or shoulder to initiate the lead out of this move
- Remember that the primary lead is from the chest; the lead's hand/arm on the follower's back is mainly to guide vertical movement and a subtle re-enforcement of horizontal movement.
- For more 'sensual' movements, use poses that you can make smoothly extend over several beats.

Exercise: basket cuddle

- *Very similar to a basket*
- *Double handed move; Lead the follower to turn in front of you, quartering so that their left foot ends up between yours and your right foot is between theirs.*
- *Right hand should stay low all through this move and be used to 'block' on the follower's right hip.*
- *Right pectoral should block the follower from turning further than necessary and followers should 'present' their back to the lead's chest.*
- *Left hand should drop down to follower's left hip*

Tips

- The followers hands can be dropped once into position and the lead's right arm taken to the follower's left hip.
- Once in position, where the hands are doesn't really matter; the right hand/arm is used to keep the follower in place and convey the lead, the left is used for styling mainly and could be anywhere.
- Use the left hand on hip or shoulder to initiate the lead out of this move, or simply release with the right arm
- Remember that the primary lead is from the chest; the lead's hand/arm on the follower's back is mainly to guide vertical movement and a subtle re-enforcement of horizontal movement.
- For more 'sensual' movements, use poses that you can make smoothly extend over several beats.

Movement

"Blues dancing" as a sub-set of Modern Jive* is all about hearing and feeling the music; there is a strong connection with it and 'smouldering' attitude running through the whole dance. To convey the rhythm of the music to your partner, the central MJ 'step on every beat' philosophy is applied – the main difference is that the 'step' is more a soft 'squish' with the heel.

Timing forms a big part of movement and the occasional double time step or 'hold' within this position is used to add some interest and interpret the music.

Once actually in these positions, the follower should only exit them when led to do so – this leaves both hands of the lead and follow free to pose or caress

{*Blues Dancing' has been around for many years prior to MJ, however what we now know as "blues" has been developed from a MJ base and then warped to fit these moves/style/philosophy.}

Entrance

Coming into either of these positions should in it's self be very sensual; either take your time over the entrance or arrive early so that you have time for some stylish 'enhancements'.

Warning: these moves are very close to your partner – be careful of flailing limbs.

Exit

Close moves like these normally have a "smouldering" feel to them - the looks, caresses and poses are flames to impassion the dance. Try not to let the coals grow cold by simply reverting to standard moves with no embellishments or styling when exiting.

Make the exit reluctant to add a 'tease' factor. Make it a slide out into a pose before coming back together.

Summary

Adding some chemistry into your dancing is a great way to flirt, tease and enjoy yourself more on the dance floor. The best people at it appear to have loads of self confidence and a 'devil may care' attitude: this is only built up from practice.

It's not for every dancer, and the chemistry between two people will differ for every partner, track, dance, day, time,... You don't need to do any of this: don't feel you have to go beyond your own comfort zone.

Go back and read the introduction again -

Leads: *Just because a lady may drape themselves all over another dancer, it is not safe to assume that they will do the same thing when dancing with you.*

Followers: *don't suffer any perv-ing.*

In taking on some of the ideas within this document, I hope that leads will be more aware of what the followers can do to 'spice up' a dance *without* automatically assuming it's a come-on. And that they will be able to lead *sensual* without crossing into *sleazy*. For followers, I hope that it inspires and gives some ideas about what to do to turn the tables when the lead puts you on the spot.

Whether you are reading this, trying it out or teaching it, please give me feedback; I know the stuff in it works for me and I have tried to make it understandable for everyone – if you can help improve it, think it's brilliant or a load of pants, let me know. Contact me through the Ceroc Scotland Forum (www.cerocscotland.com/forum) or via Gadget2020@hotmail.com.

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